

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Submitted with this Amendment is a substitute specification in which the elastic member identified by reference numeral 36 is referenced as a first elastic member, and the elastic member identified by reference numeral 37 is referenced as a second elastic member to address the objection to the disclosure set forth at the top of page two of the Official Action. Also attached is a marked-up version of the specification showing the changes incorporated into the substitute specification. No new matter is introduced into the substitute specification. Withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is respectfully requested.

The subject matter of this application pertains to a vehicle door handle device comprised of an electric part received within an internal space formed within the door handle, with a gap existing between the electric part and the inner surface of the door handle. In addition, an elastic member is mounted on the electric part and is pressed against the inner surface of the door handle.

The Official Action observes that U.S. Patent No. 6,740,834 to *Sueyoshi et al.* discloses a vehicle door handle device having features corresponding to those recited in original independent claim 1. In this regard, the Examiner is thanked for providing annotated versions of Figs. 2 and 4 of *Sueyoshi et al.* explaining the interpretation set forth in the Official Action.

The Official Action interprets element 12 in *Sueyoshi et al.* as corresponding to the claimed elastic member. However, the feature identified by reference numeral 12 is a frame made of metal as described in line 32 of column 3 of *Sueyoshi et al.*

Thus, *Sueyoshi et al.* does not disclose an elastic member mounted on the electric part and pressed against the inner surface of the door handle.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Claim 1 is amended to better define the relative arrangement of the elastic member and the electric part associated with the vehicle door handle device at issue here. Claim 1 recites that the electric part possesses first and second opposite faces, with the first surface of the electric part abutting the inner surface of the door handle, and with a gap existing between the inner surface of the door handle and the second face of the electric part. In addition, Claim 1 is amended to recite that the elastic member (first elastic member) is mounted on the second face of the electric part and is disposed within the gap to be pressed against the inner surface of the door handle and the second face of the electric part.

The Official Action indicates that the detection circuit 34 in *Sueyoshi et al.* corresponds to the claimed electric part. This detection circuit 34 is provided on a base plate 32 which is secured to the frame 12 by a screw 33 as shown in Fig. 2 and described near the bottom portion of column 4 of *Sueyoshi et al.* *Sueyoshi et al.* does not disclose that the detection circuit 34 (electric part) has a first face abutting the inner surface of the door handle, and a first elastic member mounted on the opposite second face of the detection circuit 34 as recited in independent Claim 1.

It is thus respectfully submitted that the claimed vehicle door handle device recited in independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the disclosure in *Sueyoshi et al.*

The dependent claims define further distinguishing features associated with the claimed vehicle door handle device. For example, amended Claim 2 recites the

second elastic member attached to the edge of the electric part, with the second elastic member being pressed against the inner surface of the door handle through a projection formed on the inner surface of the door handle. *Sueyoshi et al.* does not disclose a second elastic member positioned as claimed.

The other dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent Claim 1.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.


Should any questions arise concerning this application, or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests the he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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